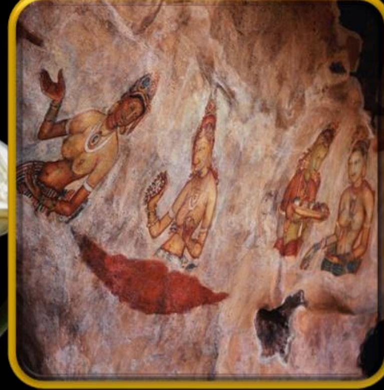
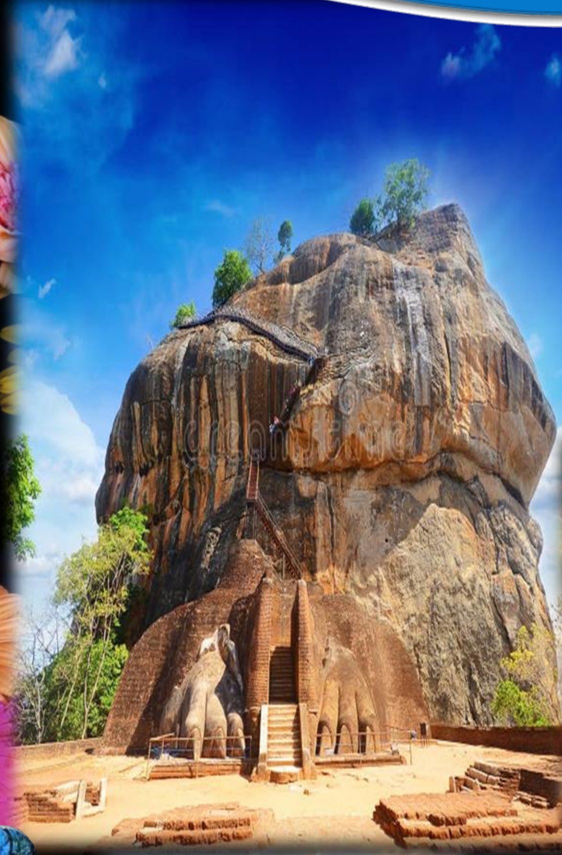
கலா இரசிகன் மன்னன் காசியப்பு

















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கலாரசிகன் மன்னன் காசியப்பு

அழகிய அதிசய முத்தென இந்துவின் அலைகள் ஓயாது
தழுவிப் பாராட்ட, குயில்கள் கூட்டமாய் சிந்து பாட,
எழில் பூத்த நாடு, எந்நாளும் பசுமை பூத்தாடும் வீடு
தாதுசேனன் ஆளும் ஈழத் திருநாடு



கோலமயில்கள் ஆட, வண்ணப் பூவினம் பூத்தாட
வேழங்கள் கூட்டமாய் மேய, கங்கைகள்
பொங்கிப் பாய, அழகு மங்கையர் நீராட-கழனி
உழுது காளைகள் கவிபாடும் திருநாடு ஈழத் நாடு

மங்கலமாய் காலையிலும், மாலையிலும்
ஒலிக்கும் பிரித்தொலி, குதூகலமாய் குடும்பங்கள்
பெருமான் புத்தரை வழிபட்டு வாழ, வறுமை
காணாத தேசம், எவ்வுயிர்க்கும் நேசம்



கரைகாணாத சமுத்திரமாய் -மன்னன் தாதுசேனன்
கட்டிய கலா வாவி -காணுந்தோறும் மன்னன்
மனதிலே பரவசம், நீர் பாயும் பூமியெங்கும் பசுமையின்
வசந்தம், உழவர் வாழ்வோ நாளும் உற்சவம்

கழனிகள் செழிக்க, வறுமை ஒழிக்க வரலாற்றில்
நிலைத்த நீர் வளம்-பட்டத்து இளவரசன் முகலனோடும்,
மகன் காசியப்பனோடும், மகள் சங்கவோடும், தளபதி
மூராவோடும் பார்வையிட்ட மனதில் பெருமிதம்

கண்கள் காதலைப் பரிமாற, இதயங்கள்
இடம் மாறித் துடிக்க, சங்காவின் மனதில்
காதலின் ஊர்வலம், தளபதி மனதில் ஆனந்தம்
கண்ணுற்ற மன்னனுக்கும் பேரின்பம்

மணிமேகலையும், பங்கயப் பாதச் சிலம்பும் சங்கீதம்
பாட, பூ முகத்தில் நிலைத்த புன்னகை நாணத்தைச்
சொல்ல, பூவாய் பூத்த விழிகளை மதுகாரியாய்
மொய்த்த தளபதி விழிகளில் காதல் ரீங்காரம்

கண்ணோக்கி கண் மயங்க, விழிப்பிலும் வரும்
காதல் கனவு, நாணி மெய் சிலிர்க்க, சங்கா மனதில்
பூத்த காதல் , நறுமணமாக, இரு மனம் ஒன்றாக
திருமணத்திற்கு ஒப்புதல் தந்த தந்தை மனதில் பரிமளம்

சகோதரி மகனோ படைத்தளபதி, சகோதரியோ
நிர்வாகத்தில் சிறந்த அதிபதி, பிரதானிகள்
சபையில் அவளுக்கோ முதலிடம், உறவு முறையில்
திருமணம் உன்னதம் மன்னனுக்கோ பெருமிதம்



சங்காவின் திருமண வாழ்வு

மகா சங்கம் வாழ்த்திட-மகத்தான விழா
என மக்கள் கோலாகலாமாய் கொண்டாடிட-
மன்னனும், மகாராணியும் மனங்குளிர-இளவரசி
சங்காவின் திருமணம், தம்பதிகளுக்கோ இன்பம்

மதுவிலும், மங்கையர் சுகத்திலும் இன்பம் காணும் தளபதி
இளவரசி சங்காவின் இதயத்திலோ பேரிடி, மகனுக்காய்
பரிந்துரைத்த தாயோ, மன்னனைக் கவிழ்த்திட மறை முகமாய்
புரியும் சதி, அறிந்திட பறிபோன மகள் சங்காவின் நிம்மதி,

பஞ்சணையும் முள்ளாக, பரிமளமும் நாறிட
கண்ட வண்ணக் கனவு கலைந்திட, கலங்கிய
வஞ்சிக் கொடி, நாளும் நடக்கும் அக்கிரமத்தால்-மனம்
கொதிக்க, விழிகள் சிவக்க வாடிய முல்லைக் கொடி

மாமியார் சதி அறிந்த மங்கை நெஞ்சில் பூகம்பம்
பொன்மேனி கருக, பூவிழிகள் வாட, கார்குழல் கலைய,
பொன்னணி இன்றி, பூந்துகில் புழுதியில் வாட,
கலங்கிய நங்கை, தந்தைக்கு அறிவிக்க ஓடிய மங்கை



மங்கையைச் வீட்டில் சிறைவைத்து துன்புறுத்திய மாமி,
மன்னனுக்குச் செய்தி எட்டாமல் காத்த சதிகாரி
ஒற்றர் தந்த செய்தியால் துடித்த மன்னன்
உறவு பகையாக மகளை மீட்ட அப்பன்

தாரை தாரையாய் செங்கண் கயல்கள் நீர் பொழிய
பொன்மேனி காயங்கள் உற்ற துயர் பகிர, வாடிய
பூங்கொடியாய் தந்தை மார்பில் சாய்ந்த மங்கை,
மன்னன் மனதில் பொங்கிய எரிமலை

கயல் விழிகள் நீராட கரைந்த அஞ்சனம் மலர் முகத்திற்கு
கறையாக, புழுதி பட்டு பூந்துகில் அழகிழக்க, பொன் அணியின்றி,
பூ மேனி வாட, பூ மலரின்றி கார்குழல் கலைய,
தந்தை தோளில் சரணம் எனப் படர்ந்த முல்லைக் கொடி

சதி

தன் மகனை அரசனாக்கி, இளவரசியை மகாராணியாக்கி
மகனும், மருமகளும் அறியாமல் -சில மந்திரி பிரதானிகளோடு
மன்னன் குடும்பத்தைப் பலியாக்கிட ஆடிய சதுரங்கம், மகனும் பகடை,
மருமகளும் பகடை, நானே மகாராணி தமக்கை வகுத்த சதி

விசாரணையில் வெளிவந்த உண்மை,
குற்றவாளியை நிர்வாணமாய் ஊர்வலமாக்கிய நீதி
மகன் மனதிலே மாறாத வெஞ்சினம்
பழிக்குப் பழி வஞ்சகமோ சதி

ஊர் பழிக்க, ஒரு முழத் துணியின்றி அம்மணமாய்
ஊர்வலம் வந்த தாயின் அவலம் நெஞ்சைப் பிளக்க,
பழிக்குப் பழி மூரா நெஞ்சிலே ஊழித்தாண்டவம்-பாலான
காசியப்பு நெஞ்சை நஞ்சாக்க தளபதியின் வஞ்சகம்

மருமகனைக் கொன்றால்
மகளோ விதவை, மன்னித்த
மன்னன், கூடி வாழ புத்தி கூறி
வாழ்த்திய குடும்பத் தலைவன்

முகலன் இளையவன் ஆனாலும் அவனே பட்டத்து இளவரசன்,
மன்னன் முன்மொழிய சங்கம் ஆசி வழங்க, குடிகள் குதுாகலித்து
வான்முட்ட கோஷம் எழுப்பிட ஆரவாரமாய் நிறைவேறிய சடங்கு,
மூத்தவன் காசியப்பு மனதிலே கசப்பு, மாறாத வெறுப்பு

காசியப்பனோடு நட்புக் கொண்டாடி, நண்பன்
நீயோ மூத்தவன், வைப்பாட்டிக்குப் பிறந்தாலும்
அரசாளத் தகுந்தவன், நீயிருக்க, முகலனுக்கு
பட்டத்து இளவரசுப் பதவி பொருந்தாத நீதி

நச்சு விதைகளை வஞ்சகமாய் நண்பன் மனதில் தூவி,
ஆசைத் தீயை வளர்த்த பாவி, அஞ்சாது, மன்னனைச்
சிறையெடு, எதிர்த்தால் முகலனைப் பலி கொடு
தளபதி நான் உனக்குத் துணை

கோலும், குடையும், அரியணையும்
மணி முடியும் உன் சொந்தம்,
படையோடு நான் உன் சொந்தம்
நம் எதிர்கால வாழ்வோ பேரின்பம்

புரட்சி



அதிரடியாய் நள்ளிரவில் மன்னனைச் சிறையெடுத்த
புரட்சி, முகலனோ கடல் கடந்து தப்பி ஓடிட நிகழ்ச்சி
மகாராணி , பிரதானிகள் சிறையில் வாட, முடிசூடிய
மன்னனாய் காசியப்பு, மக்கள் மனதிலோ கசப்பு

சங்கம் ஸதம்பித்திட, தெருவெங்கும் படைகள்
வியூகம் வகுத்திட, எதிர்த்தோர் கொல்லப்பட,
சிறு எதிர்ப்பும் முளையில் கிள்ளப்பட நடந்தேறிய புரட்சி,
ஈழ வரலாற்றில் காசியப்பன் அரசு கட்டிலேறிய நிகழ்ச்சி

செல்வம், சோகம்



கருவூலத்தில் கடுகளவு பொனுமில்லை, முத்தோ, நவமணிகளோ
வைரமோ இல்லை, திகைத்த காசியப்பன், எங்கே உங்கள் செல்வம்?
மறைத்த இடம் காட்டுங்கள் தந்தையை வதைக்க, கலா வாவியில்
மறைந்துள்ளது என் செல்வம், கூட்டிச் செல் காட்டுகிறேன்

படையோடு கைதியாய் மன்னன் பவனி கலாவாவியைச்
சென்றடைய, கை விலங்குகள் கழன்றிட, களிப்போடு
வாவியில் குதித்து நீராடி மகிழ்ந்த மன்னன், மூடனே இதுதான்
நான் தேடிச் சேர்த்த செல்வம், பரிகசித்த வேந்தன்

என் செல்வம் இதுதான், மண் செழிக்க
செந்நெல் செழித்துயர, உயரும் மக்கள் வாழ்வு
குடி உயரக் கோன் உயரும் மாறாத நீதி
என் வாழ்வோ மங்காப் புகழுடைய நியதி



என் ஆவியோடு கலந்த கலா வாவி
பொன், பொருளினும் உயர்ந்த வற்றாத சங்க நிதி
உன் எண்ணத்தில் அடங்காத குபேர நிதி
யாரும் திருட முடியாத அபூர்வ நிதி



மன்னவனும் நானே, மணிமுடியும் என்தே-நின்
அடி தொழுது உயிர்ப் பிச்சை கேட்டு என்னுயிர் வாழாது
கலா வாவி உள்ளவரை என் புகழ் மங்காது
சங்கத்தின் ஆசியும், குடிமக்கள் அன்பு மாறாது

தந்தையின் கூற்று தணலாய் நெஞ்சை எரிக்க
உயிரோடு இவனை இங்கே சுவர் எழுப்பி புதையுங்கள்
நாற்புறமும் சுவர் எழுந்திட, கை கூப்பி, விடை கூறி
கண் மறைந்த மன்னன், கலா வாவியின் தேவன்

உயிரோடு தந்தையை வைத்து நாற்புறமும்
எழுப்பிய சுவர் சமாதியானது-தந்தைக்கு
மகன் ஆற்றிய கடன் தர்மத்தைப் பழித்திட
சங்கம் வாடியது, சிவர ஆடை வெளிறியது



உழுது விதைத்த உழவர் விழிகள் கண்ணீரில் நீராட,
நீர் உயர, உயர்ந்த நெற்பயிர்கள் மன்னனைத்
தேடி வாட, வற்றாது வாடாது மன்னன்
புகழ் பாடும் வாவி கண்ணீராய் வழிந்தோடியது



புள்ளுறை சோலைகளும் பூபாளமின்றி வட
பூங்கமிழ் வாவிகளும் மலரின்றிச் சோர
நாளும் சங்கம் முழங்கிய பிரித் ஒலி-சோகத்தால்
சங்கினுள் ஒலிக்கும் சந்தமாய் மாறியது

ஒரு போகம் செழித்த வயல் நிலங்கள், வாவி நீரால்
இருபோகம் அறுவடையாக குதூகலித்து மன்னனை நெஞ்சார
வாழ்த்திய குடி மக்கள், கார்மேகம் தரும் கொடையோ
ஒரு பொழுது-கலாவாவி தரும் கொடையோ எப்பொழுதும்

மடிந்த மன்னனுக்கு கவி பாடிய கவிஞர்
கண்ணீர் அஞ்சலி செலுத்திய குடிகள்
வாவியோடு கலந்த உம் ஆவி-காலமெல்லாம்
வரட்சியின்றி எம்மை வாழவைக்கும் தேவ ஆவி

நாட்டு நடப்பு



தந்தை மாண்டார், தாயும், சகோதரியும் சிறைப்பட்டார்
தளபதியின் வஞ்சகம் நெஞ்சைக் கொல்ல, தனயனின்
ஆசை உறவைக் கொல்ல, போராடப் படைப்பலமின்றி
திரைகடல் தாண்டி பல்லவனிடம் சரணடைந்த முகலன்

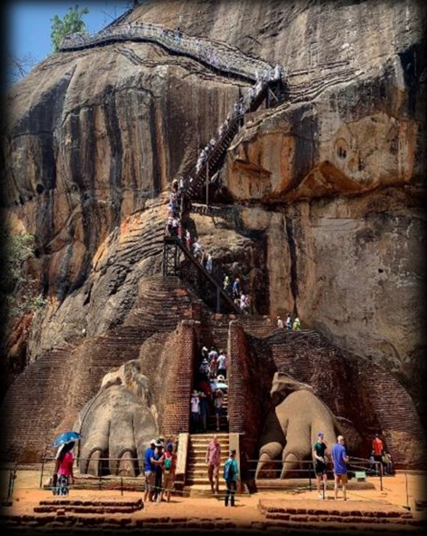
மக்கள் புரட்சி வெடிக்வில்லை-அச்சமோ குடிமக்களை
ஆளும் நிலை, செங்கோலும், வெண் குடையும்,
மணிமுடியும் தரித்து காசியப்பன் அரியணை ஏற,
சங்கம் வாளாவிருந்த அவல நிலை

முகலன் ஒரு நாள் படையோடு வருவான்
முறையான அரசுரிமையைக் கோரி யுத்தம் புரிவான்
மன்னனை் கொன்றதை மறவாத மக்கள் மனம் மாறிப்
பழி வாங்கலாம், தலை நகரை மாற்றுவதே நல்லுபாயம்

குன்றைக் தேடிக் கண்டவர், மன்னனிடம் கூற
பௌத்த துறவிகள் வாழ்ந்த குன்றை தனதாக்கி
துறவிகளுக்கு வேறு வதிவிடம் கொடுத்தவன் மனதில்
விரிந்த காவியக் கனவு ‘சிங்க கிரி- சிங்க மலை

சிங்ககிரி

உளியும், பாறையும் உருகி இன்புற்ற உறவாட
பல நூறு சிற்பிகளின் கைவண்ணத்தில்
உருவான கலைச் சிற்பம்-கல்லில் கலைவடிவம்
கண்டவன் மனதில் நாடாளும் மதிநுட்பம்





கோட்டை, கொத்தளங்களோடு, நந்தவனம்
மாளிகை அமைய, அறுநூறடி உயரமான குன்றில்
சிங்கத்தின் வாய், வாயிலாக அமைத்த அழகிய
கலைச் சிற்பம், சுற்றிலும் சுந்தர வனம், நீர்த் தேக்கம்

கண்ணாடிச் சுவரான பளிங்குப் பாறையில்
முகம் பார்த்து இரசிக்கும் மன்னவன்-அரம்பையர்
அழகு ரூபங்களை வண்ணத்தில் வரைந்து
எண்ணத்தில் காதலில் திளைத்த மன்னவன்

அனுலா- காதல் மகள்

பூம்பொழிலில் உலாவர, விழி கண்ட எழில் குலுங்கும்
மங்கை அனுலா தேவி, மனம் மயங்க, காதலான
மன்னன், பிரதானியின் மகள், அறிந்த மனம்
மங்கை மனம் அறிய ஆவல் கொண்ட தினம்

உலாவரும் சீதள நிலவை கருவானில் கண்டேன்
பூத்தாடும் செந்தாமரையை சுனையில் கண்டேன்
என் உள்ளத்தை கொள்ளையிட்ட மங்கையை
பூ வனத்தில் கண்டேன், காதல் கொண்டேன்





நிலவும், மலரும் உன் முகத்திற்கு ஈடாகுமோ?
வளர்ந்து தேயும், நிலவிற்கும் அமாவாசையுண்டு
வண்ண மலரிற்கும் வாடிட ஒரு பொழுது உண்டு-வாடாத
காதல் மலர் என் மனதில் வாழ வழியுண்டோ?

கொங்கை முகையாக, மென்மருங்குல் கொடியாக
அங்கை மலராக, அடி தளிராக, பொய்கையில்
நீராடிய மங்கை, நெஞ்சில் காதல் நீராட்ட, கண்டு
கோகிலமாய் கவிபாடிய நெஞ்சமோ அஞ்சாத சிங்கம்

மலர் முகமோ பங்கயம், பூவிழிகளில் அஞ்சனம்,
கொவ்வை இதழ்களில் தேன்மணம், பொன்மேனியில
நறுமணம், மங்காத அழகில் மங்கையோ அழகின்
திருச்சபை, மன்னன் மனதில் மங்கையின் காதல் அவை



பூவாய் மலர்ந்த மங்கையை-காதலாகிக் கொண்டாடிய
காதலர் தினம், கன்னியின் அழகை வண்ண ஓவியமாக்கி
களி நடனம் புரிந்த மதன், வாழ்வில் அனுலா வந்திட
அனுதினமும் காதலர் உலா, வாழ்வோ தேன் நிலா



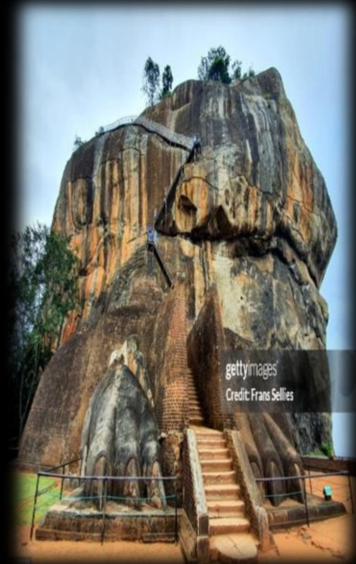
யாழும், குழலும் இசைக்க நாட்டியம்
புடைத்த தோள்களும், வலிய கால்களும்
அரியெனச் சொல்ல நாளும் போர்ப்பயிற்சி
ஆட்சி நிலைக்க சங்கத்தை ஆதரித்த நிகழ்ச்சி

சிகரியா கலைவடிவாக, காட்டுக்குள் எழுந்த
கோட்டை, எதிரிகள் நெருங்காதிருக்க
துரத்தி விரட்டி கொட்டிக் கொன்றிட
குளவி மாடம், மன்னன் தலையிலே மகுடம்

காதல் தேவதை சந்திரா



காட்டு மானை வேட்டையாட வந்த மன்னன்
தன்னுயிரைத் துச்சமாய் மதித்து
வீட்டு மானைத் துரத்தும் காட்டு யானையை விரட்டி
கன்னியின் உயிர் காத்த காவலன்



நிலவொளியில் கன்னியோ அழகிய நித்திலம்
கதிரொளியில் நங்கையோ பூரித்த செம்பங்கயம்
காத்த கட்டழகனை தொழுத மங்கை, நாணம் விழிக்க
ஆனிப்பொன்மேனி சிவக்க நிலம் பார்த்த காதல் கங்கை

மன்னன் என்றறியாமல் மையலுற்ற கன்னி
பொன்னோடு புகழ் கொண்ட வணிகனின் புதல்வி
தேடி வந்த உறவுகள் போற்றிக் கொண்டாட-காதல்
தேவதையிடம் மனதைப் பறிகொடுத்த காவலன்

காத்தவன் காவலன் என்றறிந்த கன்னி மனதில்
பூத்த காதல், யாத்த தவத்திற்கு பெருமான் புத்தர்
அருளிய வரமாய்த் திருமணம்-வாழ்வில் வசந்தமாய்
வந்த சந்திரா மனதிலோ வற்றாத காதல் நறுமணம்

காட்டு மானை வேட்டையாட வந்த காவலன்
புள்ளி மானின் காதல் வலையில் சிக்கிப் பூரித்த மன்மதன்
வெள்ளி நிலவும், சீதளத் தென்றலும் வாழ்த்திட
கன்னி மடியில் சொர்க்கம் கண்ட காதல் மன்னன்



காட்டு யானையிடம் தப்பித்த கன்னி
காமன் மலர்க் கணைபட்டு-காதல் யானையிடம் சிக்கி
மன்மத ராகம் பாடிய தேன் சிட்டு



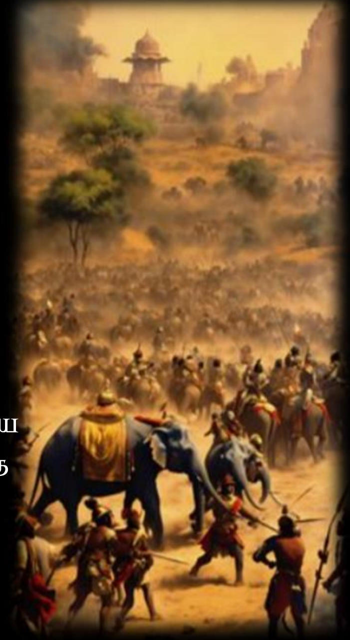
காதல் வாழ்வு

அனுலாவையும், சந்திராவையும்
அணைக்கும் மார்பில் அணையாத காதல்
துணைவியும், அன்னையுமான உறவில்
துய்க்கும் இன்பம் பேரின்பம்

அனுலா , சந்திரா காதல் வெள்ளத்தில் நீந்தி நீராடி
அன்பான கணவனாய், காவலன்-புது வசந்தத்தைக்
கொண்டாட சிகிரியா பாறைகளில் மன்னன் தீட்டிய
மங்கையர் புகழ்பாடும் மங்கா வண்ண ஓவியம்

கனவும், நனவும் இன்பமாக, காதல் வரமாக
காவலன் கட்டிய மலைக்கோட்டை கலைச் சிற்பமாய்
ஒளிர, வண்ண ஓவியங்களும் அழகாய் ஒளிர
வாழும் நாளெல்லாம் வசந்தம்





யாழும் குழலும் ஒலிக்க பிறந்த தாலாட்டு, மழலை மொழிகேட்டு
செவிகள் சிலிர்க்க, மனைவியர் காதல் மனதுக்கு இன்பமாக
தந்தையான மனதில் கோடி இன்பம், கொன்ற தந்தையை
நினைத்த மனதில் கொடுந்துன்பம், கண்களிலோ ஈரம்

யுத்தம்

பல்லாண்டுகள் போக, பல்லவன் படையோடு வந்த முகலனை
சமவெளியில் சந்தித்த மன்னன், அச்சமறியாதவன் கர்ச்சிக்க
உருண்ட தலைகள், உச்சத்தில் சாதுாரியமாய் பட்டத்து யானையை
திசை திருப்பி போராட எண்ணிட, திசை மாறிய வெற்றித் தேவதை

மன்னன் பின்வாங்குகிறார் என தவறாய் புரிந்த படைகள்
தோல்வி நிச்சயம் என்ற அச்சத்தில் புறமுதுகு காட்டி ஓடிட
கரிமேல் அரியென நின்ற மன்னன், அடிபணியேன்
மண்டியிடேன் என் அஞ்சாமல் போராடிய மா வீரன்

அழகைத் துதித்த அழகன் மனதில்
சிகரியா கலைக் காவியம், அஞ்சாது போரடி,
தன் குறுவாளை அடிவயிற்றில் செருகி-தன்னுயிரை
மாய்த்த செருக்கோ வணங்கா முடிக்குரித்தான கம்பீரம்

நூற்றாண்டுகள் போனாலும்-காலத்தால் அழியாத
கலை வடிவமாய் சிகிரியா, கொலைஞனாக முடிசூடி.
கலைஞனாக சிகிரியாவைப் படைத்து –
காதல் தலைவனாய் வாழ்ந்த மன்னன்-
உலகின் எட்டாவது அதிசயத்தின் சொந்தக்காரன்



அஞ்சா நெஞ்சத்து ஆடவனாய் போராடி
மண்டியிடேன், தலைவணங்கேன் என்ற
வணங்காமுடி, மாண்டும் சிகிரியாவால்
மனங்களில் வாழும் மணிமுடி



சிற்றலைகள் எழுந்தாட, சீதளத் தென்றல்
தழுவி நீராட, கயலும், கெண்டையும்
துள்ளி விளையாட, கழனிகள் செழித்து ஓங்க
பொங்கி நிற்கும் கலா வாவி

King Kashyapa I-ERA AD (477–495):**

இன்பமே சூழ்க-எல்லோரும் நலமே வாழ்க
எல்லாப் புகழும் இறைவனுக்கே
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Sigiriya, also known as the "Lion Rock," is an ancient rock fortress located in the central Matale District of Sri Lanka. It is one of the most significant historical and archaeological sites in the country, known for its unique architectural and artistic achievements. The history of Sigiriya is closely tied to King Kashyapa I, but it also has connections to earlier and later periods in Sri Lankan history.

Key Historical Aspects of Sigiriya:

1. **Pre-Kashyapa Era:**
   - **Monastic Settlement:** Before becoming a royal citadel, Sigiriya was a Buddhist monastic site, likely dating back to the 3rd century BCE. Monks inhabited the rock shelters and caves around Sigiriya, as evidenced by the inscriptions found in the area.
2. **King Kashyapa I (477–495 CE):**
   - **Ascension to Power:** The most famous historical figure associated with Sigiriya is King Kashyapa I. Kashyapa was the son of King Dhatusena. He came to power after overthrowing and murdering his father, fearing the rightful heir, his brother Moggallana, who fled to India.

- **Construction of the Fortress:** To secure his reign and protect himself from potential attacks by Moggallana, Kashyapa moved the capital from Anuradhapura to Sigiriya. He transformed the rock into an elaborate fortress and palace complex, with impressive defensive structures, water gardens, and artistic frescoes.
- **Architectural Marvel:** The fortress includes the Lion's Gate, a massive entrance constructed in the shape of a lion's paws, which gives Sigiriya its name. The entire complex is a blend of natural landscape and human ingenuity, with features like the Mirror Wall, water gardens, and the famous Sigiriya frescoes, depicting celestial maidens.
- **Kashyapa's Demise:** King Kashyapa ruled from Sigiriya until 495 CE, when his brother Moggallana returned with an army to claim the throne. Kashyapa was ultimately defeated in battle, and according to legend, he committed suicide by falling on his sword.

3. **Post-Kashyapa Era:**
- **Abandonment and Monastic Use:** After Kashyapa's death, Sigiriya was abandoned as a royal residence and reverted to its original use as a Buddhist monastery until the 14th century.
- **Rediscovery:** Sigiriya was largely forgotten by the outside world until it was rediscovered by the British during their colonial rule in the 19th century. Major archaeological work began in the early 20th century.

4. **Cultural and Historical Significance:**
- **UNESCO World Heritage Site:** In 1982, Sigiriya was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its cultural significance and its representation of ancient urban planning.
- **Art and Architecture:** The site is renowned for its frescoes, which are among the best-preserved examples of ancient Sri Lankan painting. The Mirror Wall, once polished so that the king could see his reflection, is covered with ancient graffiti, some of which date back to the 8th century.

Sigiriya remains one of Sri Lanka's most visited and iconic landmarks, symbolizing the island's rich history and architectural heritage.

King Kashyapa I's decision to kill his father, King Dhatusena, is rooted in a complex mix of familial betrayal, ambition, and fear. The story of Kashyapa's rise to power and his father's death is one of the most dramatic and tragic tales in Sri Lankan history.

The Context Leading to the Murder:

1. **Kashyapa's Illegitimacy:**
- King Kashyapa was the son of King Dhatusena by a concubine, making him a less legitimate heir to the throne compared to his half-brother Moggallana, who was born to Dhatusena's queen. Despite this, Kashyapa harbored ambitions to become king, but his father favored Moggallana as the rightful heir.

2. **Influence of the Commander Migara:**
- Migara, the commander of the army and a nephew of King Dhatusena, played a significant role in Kashyapa's actions. Migara had personal grievances against Dhatusena, as the king had ordered the execution of Migara's mother, possibly for disloyalty or treason.
- Migara manipulated Kashyapa, fueling his ambitions and fears. He convinced Kashyapa that his father would never allow him to become king and that Moggallana would ascend the throne, leaving Kashyapa powerless or in danger.

3. **The Coup and Imprisonment:**
- Under Migara's influence, Kashyapa staged a coup, imprisoning his father, King Dhatusena. Kashyapa demanded that his father reveal the location of his hidden treasures. Dhatusena, however, took him to the Kala Wewa, a large reservoir that he had built, and told him that this was his greatest treasure.
- Feeling deceived and enraged, and possibly under further manipulation by Migara, Kashyapa ordered his father's execution. According to legend, Dhatusena was either entombed alive within a wall or drowned in the reservoir.

4. **Kashyapa's Reign and Paranoia:**
- After the murder of his father, Kashyapa ascended the throne. However, his rule was marked by guilt, paranoia, and the constant fear of retribution from his brother Moggallana, who had fled to India to escape the coup.
- Kashyapa moved the capital to Sigiriya, where he built the famous rock fortress, both as a symbol of his power and as a defensive measure against potential attacks.

5. **Downfall:**
   - Kashyapa's reign ended in 495 CE when Moggallana returned with an army. In the ensuing battle, Kashyapa's forces were defeated, and, realizing his imminent defeat, Kashyapa took his own life.

Conclusion:
King Kashyapa's murder of his father, King Dhatusena, was driven by a combination of personal ambition, manipulation by his uncle Migara, and fear of being sidelined in the royal succession. The act not only haunted Kashyapa throughout his reign but also set in motion the events that led to his eventual downfall.

King Kashyapa I of Sri Lanka met a tragic end after losing a decisive battle against his half-brother, Moggallana. Here's a detailed account of the events leading to his death:

The Battle and Kashyapa's Death:

1. **Moggallana's Return:**
   - After Kashyapa murdered their father, King Dhatusena, and usurped the throne, Moggallana fled to South India. He spent several years there, gathering support to reclaim the throne.
   - In 495 CE, Moggallana returned to Sri Lanka with a formidable army, determined to avenge his father’s death and take back the kingdom.

2. **The Final Battle:**
   - The two armies met on the plains near Sigiriya, where Kashyapa had built his fortress. Despite his fortified position, Kashyapa decided to confront Moggallana on the battlefield, possibly due to his confidence in his military strength.
   - During the battle, a crucial miscommunication occurred. Kashyapa, riding an elephant, made a tactical move to reposition his forces. His troops, however, misinterpreted this maneuver as a retreat, leading to confusion and panic in his ranks.

3. **Desertion and Defeat:**
   - Seeing what they believed was their king retreating, many of Kashyapa's soldiers began to flee the battlefield. As his army crumbled, Kashyapa was left vulnerable.
   - Realizing that he was facing defeat and that escape was impossible, Kashyapa chose to avoid capture.

4. **Kashyapa’s Suicide:**
   - Rather than surrender to Moggallana and face the humiliation of capture, Kashyapa took his own life. According to historical accounts, he drew his sword and killed himself on the battlefield.
   - Some versions of the story suggest that he fell on his sword, while others imply that he might have slit his own throat.

5. **Aftermath:**
   - After Kashyapa’s death, Moggallana assumed the throne. He moved the capital back to Anuradhapura and restored the kingdom to stability.
   - Moggallana reportedly treated Kashyapa's body with respect, giving him a proper burial, despite the enmity between them.

Conclusion:
King Kashyapa's death was the culmination of a series of tragic events that began with his betrayal of his father. His final act on the battlefield, choosing suicide over capture, marked the end of his turbulent reign and allowed his brother Moggallana to reclaim the throne and restore order in the kingdom.
Sigiriya, often referred to as the "Lion Rock," holds immense significance due to its historical, cultural, architectural, and archaeological value. Here’s an overview of the different aspects that make Sigiriya one of Sri Lanka’s most treasured sites:

1. **Historical Significance:**
- **Royal Citadel:** Sigiriya served as the royal citadel of King Kashyapa I in the 5th century CE. After he murdered his father, King Dhatusena, and seized the throne, Kashyapa moved the capital from Anuradhapura to Sigiriya. The fortress became the center of his kingdom, symbolizing his power and strategic thinking.
- **Monastic Site:** Before and after Kashyapa's reign, Sigiriya was primarily a Buddhist monastic site. Monks had inhabited the area as early as the 3rd century BCE, and after Kashyapa's death, Sigiriya reverted to being a monastery, retaining its religious significance for centuries.

2. **Architectural Significance:**
- **Engineering Marvel:** The construction of Sigiriya is a remarkable feat of ancient engineering. The site features a complex network of gardens, pools, fountains, and terraces, all meticulously designed to harmonize with the natural rock formation. The water gardens, in particular, demonstrate advanced hydraulic engineering, with functioning fountains that still operate during the rainy season.
- **Lion's Gate:** The entrance to the palace atop the rock was through a massive gateway carved in the shape of a lion. While only the lion's paws remain today, they give the site its name ("Sigiriya" translates to "Lion Rock"). This entrance symbolized both power and protection, reflecting Kashyapa's desire to intimidate his enemies and control access to his stronghold.

3. **Cultural and Artistic Significance:**
- **Frescoes:** Sigiriya is renowned for its exquisite frescoes, depicting celestial maidens or apsaras, painted on the western face of the rock. These frescoes, created with natural pigments, are considered masterpieces of ancient Sri Lankan art and are among the few surviving examples of early Buddhist painting in the region. They reflect the artistic sophistication of the period and the influence of Indian and local traditions.
- **Mirror Wall:** The Mirror Wall is another iconic feature of Sigiriya, originally polished so smoothly that the king could see his reflection in it. Over time, the wall became covered with inscriptions and graffiti, some dating back to the 8th century, providing insights into the thoughts and feelings of visitors from various periods.

4. **Archaeological Significance:**
- **Urban Planning:** Sigiriya is an excellent example of ancient urban planning. The site's layout, with its symmetrical gardens, complex irrigation systems, and strategic use of natural topography, demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of landscape architecture. The citadel's defensive features, including moats, ramparts, and the positioning of the palace on the rock's summit, highlight the military and architectural ingenuity of the time.
- **Ongoing Research:** Sigiriya continues to be an important archaeological site, with ongoing excavations revealing new aspects of its history. Artifacts, inscriptions, and structures found at Sigiriya provide valuable information about the social, political, and religious life of ancient Sri Lanka.

5. **UNESCO World Heritage Site:**
- **Global Recognition:** In 1982, Sigiriya was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognizing its unique cultural value and significance as a testament to ancient Sri Lankan civilization. The site is considered one of the best-preserved examples of early urban planning and is a key symbol of Sri Lanka's rich historical heritage.

6. **Tourism and National Identity:**
- **Major Tourist Attraction:** Today, Sigiriya is one of Sri Lanka's most popular tourist destinations, attracting visitors from around the world who come to explore its history, art, and architecture. It is often referred to as the "Eighth Wonder of the World" due to its extraordinary combination of natural and human-made features.
- **Cultural Symbol:** Sigiriya is a powerful symbol of Sri Lankan identity and heritage, representing the country's ancient past, its artistic achievements, and the ingenuity of its people.

Conclusion:

Sigiriya is significant not only as a royal citadel and fortress but also as a cultural, architectural, and archaeological treasure. It stands as a testament to the creativity, engineering skills, and artistic accomplishments of ancient Sri Lanka, making it an enduring symbol of the country's rich history and heritage.
--Kala Wewa is a significant ancient reservoir in Sri Lanka, renowned for its engineering and historical importance. It was built by **King Dhatusena**, who reigned from 455 to 473 CE. Dhatusena was a key figure in Sri Lankan history, known for his contributions to the country's irrigation systems, which were vital for agriculture and the overall prosperity of the Anuradhapura Kingdom.

Key Details about Kala Wewa:

- **Construction**: Kala Wewa is part of an extensive network of reservoirs created during King Dhatusena's reign. It was designed to collect and store water for agricultural purposes, particularly for rice cultivation, which was a staple of the economy.
- **Location**: The reservoir is located in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, near the town of Kekirawa. It is connected to another reservoir, Balalu Wewa, and together, they form one of the largest irrigation complexes of ancient Sri Lanka.
- **Irrigation System**: Kala Wewa is linked to the famous Jaya Ganga (also known as Yodha Ela), a canal that carries water from Kala Wewa to the Tissa Wewa in Anuradhapura, over 54 miles away. This sophisticated irrigation system exemplifies the advanced hydraulic engineering skills of ancient Sri Lanka.
Significance:

- **Agricultural Impact**: The construction of Kala Wewa greatly improved the agricultural output of the region by providing a reliable water source for farming. This, in turn, supported the population and contributed to the prosperity of the kingdom.

- **Historical Importance**: Kala Wewa is a testament to King Dhatusena's vision and commitment to improving the infrastructure and economy of his kingdom. It also played a role in the tragic events that led to his death, as it was during a dispute over the location of his treasure that he took Kashyapa to view the Kala Wewa, which he considered his greatest achievement.
Kala Wewa remains an enduring symbol of the ingenuity and foresight of ancient Sri Lankan rulers in managing the island's water resources, and it continues to serve the region even today.
King Dhatusena's decision to kill Migara's mother, who was also his own sister, is a critical event in the tragic story that led to his downfall and the subsequent rise of his son, Kashyapa I. The act was driven by political and familial tensions, primarily surrounding issues of loyalty and betrayal.

Background and Context:

1. **King Dhatusena and His Reign:**
   - King Dhatusena ruled the Anuradhapura Kingdom from 455 to 473 CE. He is remembered for his contributions to Sri Lanka's irrigation system, particularly the construction of the Kala Wewa reservoir, and for his efforts to restore Buddhism after periods of decline.
   - Dhatusena's reign, however, was also marked by internal strife and power struggles within the royal family and the court.

2. **Migara's Role:**
   - Migara was a high-ranking commander in Dhatusena's army and a member of the royal family, being the king's nephew. He played a significant role in the military and political affairs of the kingdom.
   - Migara's mother, and Dhatusena's sister, held influence in the court, but she became involved in a plot that ultimately led to her tragic fate.

3. **Accusations of Treason:**

- Migara’s mother was accused of conspiring against King Dhatusena. She allegedly betrayed him by secretly communicating with the enemies of the king, or by encouraging her son, Migara, to act against Dhatusena's interests. This was seen as an act of treason.
- The exact nature of her betrayal is not clearly detailed in historical records, but it is commonly believed that her actions threatened the security of Dhatusena’s reign and the stability of the kingdom.

4. **Execution of Migara’s Mother:**
- Upon discovering her betrayal, Dhatusena ordered the execution of his sister. In some accounts, she was reportedly punished in a particularly cruel manner—she was either burnt alive or immured within a wall, an act that deeply shocked and angered Migara.
- This execution not only strained the relationship between Dhatusena and Migara but also set the stage for the dramatic events that followed.

5. **Migara’s Revenge:**
- Driven by a desire for revenge, Migara played a crucial role in the downfall of King Dhatusena. He manipulated Kashyapa, Dhatusena’s son, into believing that the king favored his half-brother Moggallana and would never allow Kashyapa to inherit the throne.
- This manipulation led to the coup against Dhatusena, resulting in his imprisonment and eventual execution by his son, Kashyapa, in a tragic and ironic twist of fate.

Conclusion:
King Dhatusena’s decision to execute his sister, Migara’s mother, was rooted in her perceived betrayal and the threat it posed to his reign. This act of familial violence led to a deep rift within the royal family, ultimately contributing to Dhatusena’s downfall and the tragic events that followed. It highlights the intense power struggles and personal vendettas that characterized this period of Sri Lankan history.

King Dhatusena of Sri Lanka, who reigned from 455 to 473 CE, had two notable children:

1. **Prince Kashyapa I (Kassapa I):**
- **Role:** Kashyapa I is the most famous of Dhatusena's children, primarily because of his dramatic rise to power and the events that led to his father's death. Kashyapa was the son of Dhatusena by a concubine, which made his claim to the throne less legitimate compared to his half-brother Moggallana.
- **Key Events:**
  - Kashyapa, influenced by the royal commander Migara, staged a coup against Dhatusena, leading to his father’s imprisonment and eventual execution.
  - After seizing the throne, Kashyapa moved the capital from Anuradhapura to Sigiriya, where he built the famous rock fortress.
  - His reign ended in 495 CE when his half-brother Moggallana returned from India with an army to reclaim the throne. Kashyapa was defeated in battle and took his own life.

2. **Prince Moggallana I (Mugalan):**
- **Role:** Moggallana I was the rightful heir to the throne, being the son of Dhatusena and his queen. Unlike Kashyapa, Moggallana had a legitimate claim to the throne and was his father’s preferred successor.
- **Key Events:**
  - When Kashyapa seized power, Moggallana fled to South India to avoid being killed. He spent several years there, gathering support to reclaim his father’s throne.
  - In 495 CE, Moggallana returned to Sri Lanka with a military force and defeated Kashyapa in a decisive battle.
  - After Kashyapa's death, Moggallana became the king of Anuradhapura. He moved the capital back to Anuradhapura and ruled the kingdom, working to restore stability and order after the turmoil of Kashyapa's reign.

Summary:

King Dhatusena had two prominent children, Kashyapa I and Moggallana I, whose rivalry and the tragic events that unfolded between them dramatically shaped the history of Sri Lanka during the 5th century. Kashyapa's betrayal and Moggallana's eventual victory are central to the story of Sigiriya and the broader history of the Anuradhapura Kingdom.

Yes, King Dhatusena is believed to have had a daughter named **Princess Sangha** (sometimes spelled as "Sanga"). Although less is known about her compared to her brothers, Kashyapa and Moggallana, she plays a role in the historical narrative, particularly in the context of the royal family's dynamics.

Role of Princess Sangha:
- **Relationship with Kashyapa and Moggallana:** As the sister of Kashyapa and Moggallana, Princess Sangha would have been part of the royal family during the turbulent period leading up to and following the events of King Dhatusena's reign. However, the historical records focus more on the conflict between her brothers and the fate of her father.

- **Connection to the Story of Dhatusena's Death:** Some accounts suggest that Princess Sangha tried to mediate or protect her father during the conflict between Kashyapa and Dhatusena. Despite her efforts, the tragic events unfolded, leading to Dhatusena's death at the hands of Kashyapa.

- **Historical Records:** The details of Princess Sangha's life are not well-documented in ancient texts, and much of what is known comes from the broader context of the history of the Anuradhapura Kingdom. She likely lived through the same period of turmoil that affected her father and brothers, witnessing the dramatic shifts in power within the royal family.
In summary, while Princess Sangha is not as prominently featured in historical narratives as her brothers, she was indeed a daughter of King Dhatusena and part of the royal family during a crucial period in Sri Lankan history.
How King Kashyapa Located Sigiriya:

1. **Context of the Move:**
   - After seizing the throne through a coup against his father, King Dhatusena, Kashyapa I sought to establish a secure and defensible position to protect himself from potential retaliation by his half-brother Moggallana, who had fled to South India.
   - To secure his reign and establish a stronghold away from the political center in Anuradhapura, Kashyapa needed a location that offered both strategic advantages and a suitable natural setting for a fortified palace.

2. **Selection of Sigiriya:**
   - **Strategic Location:** Sigiriya was chosen for its natural defensive qualities. The site features a massive, isolated rock outcrop rising nearly 200 meters (660 feet) above the surrounding landscape, making it an ideal location for a fortress. Its elevation provided a strong vantage point and natural defense against invaders.
   - **Natural Features:** The surrounding landscape, with its dense forests, water reservoirs, and rocky terrain, added to the strategic advantage of the location. The rock itself, known as "Sihagiri" or "Lion Rock," offered a natural fortification that could be enhanced with human-made defenses.
   - **Architectural Potential:** Kashyapa saw the potential to build an impressive and imposing palace complex atop the rock, utilizing its natural height to create a grand and secure residence.

3. **Development of the Site:**
   - **Construction:** Kashyapa began extensive construction on Sigiriya, transforming it into a royal citadel and palace complex. This included building defensive walls, moats, gardens, pools, and terraces. The Lion's Gate, a massive entrance designed in the shape of a lion's paws, was constructed to provide an imposing and symbolic entry to the fortress.
   - **Art and Architecture:** The site was adorned with elaborate frescoes depicting celestial maidens and intricate water gardens that showcased advanced hydraulic engineering. The Mirror Wall, once polished to reflect the king's image, was also an important feature of the complex.

Significance of Sigiriya:

1. **Historical and Political Significance:**
   - **Royal Capital:** Sigiriya served as the capital of King Kashyapa I and symbolized his power and ambition. It was intended to be a secure stronghold and a statement of his authority, both to his enemies and his subjects.
   - **Defense and Strategy:** The strategic location of Sigiriya provided a nearly impregnable defense against potential attackers, including Moggallana, who eventually returned to reclaim the throne.

2. **Architectural and Engineering Marvel:**
   - **Innovative Design:** Sigiriya is renowned for its sophisticated urban planning and architectural design. The integration of natural features with advanced engineering, such as the creation of the complex hydraulic system for the gardens and fountains, demonstrates remarkable ingenuity.
   - **Cultural Artifacts:** The frescoes on the western face of the rock and the Mirror Wall with its ancient graffiti are significant cultural artifacts that offer insights into the art and daily life of the period.

3. **Cultural and Artistic Importance:**
   - **Artistic Masterpieces:** The frescoes of celestial maidens, the intricate carvings, and the architectural features of Sigiriya reflect the artistic and cultural achievements of ancient Sri Lanka.
   - **Symbolic Value:** The site represents an era of grandeur and sophistication in Sri Lankan history, showcasing the capabilities of ancient builders and the aesthetic values of the time.

4. **UNESCO World Heritage Site:**
   - **Global Recognition:** Sigiriya was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982, recognizing its outstanding universal value. It is celebrated for its cultural significance and its representation of ancient urban planning and artistry.

5. **Tourism and Legacy:**
   - **Major Attraction:** Sigiriya remains one of Sri Lanka’s most visited tourist destinations, drawing visitors from around the world who come to explore its historical, architectural, and artistic wonders.
   - **National Symbol:** It stands as a powerful symbol of Sri Lanka’s rich cultural heritage and historical legacy, reflecting the island’s advanced ancient civilization.

In summary, Sigiriya’s location and development by King Kashyapa were driven by strategic considerations and a desire to create a grand royal residence. Its significance lies in its historical role as a fortress, its architectural and engineering innovations, and its cultural and artistic contributions to Sri Lankan heritage.
-----King Kashyapa I of Sri Lanka had several wives, reflecting the polygamous practices of the time. The most notable among them include:
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1. **Queen Anuladevi:**
   - **Background:** Anuladevi was Kashyapa’s primary wife and was a key figure in his court. She was the daughter of a prominent noble family, which was common for royal marriages aimed at strengthening political alliances.
   - **Significance:** As Kashyapa's chief queen, Anuladevi would have held significant influence in the court and been involved in the administrative and ceremonial aspects of the kingdom. However, her fate and actions during Kashyapa's reign are not as well-documented as those of other figures.

2. **Queen Chandra:**
   - **Background:** Chandra was another of Kashyapa’s wives. Like Anuladevi, she was also from a noble family, which was typical for securing political support through marriage alliances.
   - **Significance:** Details about Queen Chandra’s role and her influence in the court are less documented, but she was part of the royal household during Kashyapa’s reign.

3. **Other Wives and Concubines:**

   - **Background:** In addition to his primary wives, Kashyapa likely had other wives and concubines, as polygamy was common among kings to ensure political alliances and to increase the number of heirs.
   - **Significance:** While specific names and roles of these wives are not always detailed in historical records, they would have been part of the royal court and contributed to the king's alliances and succession planning.

Context and Significance:
- **Political Alliances:** Marriages in ancient Sri Lanka, particularly among royalty, were often strategic, aimed at forming alliances and consolidating power. The choice of wives would have been influenced by political considerations as well as personal preference.
- **Succession and Influence:** The wives of a king played roles in succession planning and court politics. Their children could potentially claim the throne, and their influence could affect the king’s decisions and policies.

While historical records provide more information about the significant events and figures of Kashyapa’s reign, the detailed personal lives of his wives are less documented. Nonetheless, they were important figures in the royal court and played roles in the political and social landscape of the time.

The mural paintings at Sigiriya, known as the **Sigiriya frescoes**, are one of the most remarkable aspects of this ancient site. They are renowned for their artistic quality and historical significance. Here’s an overview of the frescoes:

Overview of the Sigiriya Frescoes:

1. **Location and Discovery:**
   - **Location:** The frescoes are located on the western face of the Sigiriya rock, approximately halfway up the rock face. They are painted in a sheltered grotto, which has preserved the vibrant colors and intricate details of the artwork.
   - **Discovery:** The frescoes were rediscovered in the 19th century by British archaeologists and have since been studied and preserved as significant cultural artifacts.

2. **Artistic Features:**
   - **Style:** The frescoes are executed in the traditional Sri Lankan style, which shows strong influences from Indian art but with unique local characteristics. The style is characterized by fluid lines, vibrant colors, and intricate detailing.
   - **Subjects:** The paintings predominantly depict celestial maidens, known as apsaras or **“Sigiriya Damsels”**. These figures are shown in graceful, dancing poses and are adorned with elaborate jewelry and headdresses. The murals convey a sense of beauty, elegance, and divine grace.
   - **Color and Technique:** The frescoes were created using natural pigments and a technique that involved applying the paint to wet plaster, a method known as fresco secco. The colors have remained vivid over the centuries, showcasing the skill of the ancient artists.

3. **Historical and Cultural Context:**
   - **Royal Symbolism:** The frescoes are believed to have been commissioned by King Kashyapa I as part of his grandiose palace complex. They likely served both decorative and symbolic purposes, reflecting the king’s power and the divine or semi-divine status of the figures depicted.
   - **Religious and Mythological Themes:** The depiction of celestial maidens may have had religious or mythological significance, possibly representing the divine or supernatural aspects of the king’s rule.

4. **Conservation and Study:**
   - **Preservation:** The frescoes have been subject to conservation efforts to protect them from damage caused by weathering, human contact, and pollution. Preservation techniques have aimed to maintain the integrity of the original artwork while making it accessible to visitors.
   - **Research:** Scholars and archaeologists have studied the frescoes to gain insights into the art, culture, and religion of ancient Sri Lanka. Research has focused on the techniques used, the symbolic meanings, and the historical context of the paintings.

5. **Cultural Impact:**
   - **Tourism:** The frescoes are a major attraction at Sigiriya and draw visitors from around the world. They are celebrated for their artistic excellence and their role in the cultural heritage of Sri Lanka.
   - **Symbolism:** The frescoes have become an iconic representation of ancient Sri Lankan art and are often associated with the grandeur and sophistication of King Kashyapa's reign.

Significance of the Frescoes:

- **Artistic Achievement:** The Sigiriya frescoes are considered masterpieces of ancient Sri Lankan art. Their quality and preservation offer valuable insights into the artistic techniques and aesthetics of the period.
- **Cultural Heritage:** The frescoes contribute significantly to the understanding of Sri Lanka's cultural and historical heritage, reflecting the high level of skill and creativity in ancient Sri Lankan society.
- **Historical Insight:** The frescoes provide a glimpse into the royal and religious symbolism of the time, enhancing our understanding of the cultural and political context in which they were created.

In summary, the Sigiriya frescoes are a stunning example of ancient Sri Lankan art, reflecting the artistic sophistication and cultural richness of the period. They continue to be a source of fascination and admiration for scholars, art enthusiasts, and visitors.

igiriya or Sinhagiri (Lion Rock Sinhala: සීගිරිය, Tamil: சிகிரியா/சிங்ககிரி, pronounced SEE-gi-ri-yə) is an ancient rock fortress located in the northern Matale District near the town of Dambulla in the Central Province, Sri Lanka. It is a site of historical and archaeological significance that is dominated by a massive column of granite approximately 180 m (590 ft) high.

Website www.sigiriyafortress.com

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Official name	Ancient City of Sigiriya
Type	Cultural
Criteria	ii, iii, iv
Designated	1982 (6th session)
Reference no.	202

UNESCO Region
Asia-Pacific

According to the ancient Sri Lankan chronicle the Cūḷavaṃsa, this area was a large forest, then after storms and landslides it became a hill and was selected by King Kashyapa (AD 477–495) for his new capital. He built his palace on top of this rock and decorated its sides with colourful frescoes. On a small plateau about halfway up the side of this rock he built a gateway in the form of an enormous lion. The name of this place is derived from this structure; Siṃhagiri, the Lion Rock.
The capital and the royal palace were abandoned after the king's death. It was used as a Buddhist monastery until the 14th century. Sigiriya today is a UNESCO listed World Heritage Site. It is one of the best preserved examples of ancient urban planning.

History
Historical past
It is likely that the area around Sigiriya was inhabited since prehistoric times. There is clear evidence that the many rock shelters and caves in the vicinity were occupied by Buddhist monks and ascetics from as early as the 3rd century BC.

The earliest evidence of human habitation at Sigiriya is the Aligala rock shelter to the east of Sigiriya rock, indicating that the area was occupied circa 3000 BC during the Mesolithic Period.
Buddhist monastic settlements were established during the 3rd century BC in the western and northern slopes of the boulder-strewn hills surrounding the Sigiriya rock. Several rock shelters or caves were created during this period. These shelters were made under large boulders, with carved drip ledges around the cave mouths. Rock inscriptions are carved near the drip ledges on many of the shelters, recording the donation of the shelters to the Buddhist monastic order as residences. These were made in the period between the 3rd century BC and the 1st century AD.
In 477 AD, Kashyapa I, the king's son by a non-royal consort, seized the throne from King Dhatusena, following a coup assisted by Migara, the King's nephew and army commander. The rightful heir, Moggallana, fearing for his life, fled to South India. Afraid of an attack by Moggallana, Kashyapa moved the capital and his residence from the traditional capital of Anuradhapura to the more secure Sigiriya. During King Kashyapa's reign (477–495 AD), Sigiriya was developed into a complex city and fortress. Most of the elaborate constructions on the rock summit and around it, including defensive structures, palaces, and gardens, date from this period.
The Cūḷavaṃsa describes King Kashyapa as the son of King Dhatusena. Kashyapa murdered his father by walling him up alive and then usurping the throne which rightfully belonged to his half-brother Moggallana, Dhatusena's son by the true queen. Moggallana fled to India to escape being assassinated by Kashyapa, but vowed revenge. In India he raised an army with the intention of returning and retaking the throne of Sri Lanka, which he considered to be rightfully his. Expecting the inevitable return of Moggallana, Kashyapa is said to have built his palace on the summit of Sigiriya as a fortress as well as a pleasure palace. Moggallana finally arrived, declared war, and defeated Kashyapa in 495 AD. During the battle Kashyapa's armies abandoned him and he committed suicide by falling on his sword.
The Cūḷavaṃsa and folklore inform us that the battle elephant on which Kashyapa was mounted changed course to take a strategic advantage, but the army misinterpreted the movement as the king's having opted to retreat, prompting the army to abandon him altogether. It is said that being too proud to surrender he took his dagger from his waistband, cut his throat, raised the dagger proudly, sheathed it, and fell dead. Moggallana returned the capital to Anuradhapura, converting Sigiriya into a Buddhist monastery complex, which survived until the 13th or 14th century. After this period, no records are found on Sigiriya until the 16th and 17th centuries, when it was used briefly as an outpost of the Kingdom of Kandy.

Sigiriya Rock from above
Alternative stories have the primary builder of Sigiriya as King Dhatusena, with Kashyapa finishing the work in honour of his father. Still other stories describe Kashyapa as a playboy king, with Sigiriya his pleasure palace. Even Kashyapa's eventual fate is uncertain. In some versions he is assassinated by poison administered by a concubine; in others he cuts his own throat when deserted in his final battle. Still further interpretations regard the site as the work of a Buddhist community, without a military function. This site may have been important in the competition between the Mahayana and Theravada Buddhist traditions in ancient Sri Lanka.
In Professor Senarath Paranavithana's book The Story of Sigiri, King Dathusena is said to have taken the advice of the Persian Nestorian Priest Maga Brahmana on building his palace on Sigirya. According to Paranavithana, during this period over 75 ships carrying Murundi soldiers from Mangalore arrived in Sri Lanka and landed in Chilaw to protect King Dathusena, most of them Christians. King Dathusena's daughter was married to Migara, a Christian and the commander of the Singhalese army.
Archaeological remains and features

The Lion Gate and Climbing Stretch
In 1831 Major Jonathan Forbes of the 78th (Highlanders) Regiment of Foot of the British Army, while returning on horseback from a trip to Pollonnuruwa, encountered the "brushwood-covered summit of the rock of Sigiri". Sigiriya came to the attention of antiquarians and, later, archaeologists. Archaeological work at Sigiriya began on a small scale in the 1890s. H.C.P. Bell was the first archaeologist to conduct extensive research on Sigiriya. The Cultural Triangle Project, launched by the Government of Sri Lanka, focused its attention on Sigiriya in 1982. Archaeological work began on the entire city for the first time under this project. There was a sculpted lion's head above the legs and paws flanking the entrance, but the head collapsed years ago.

Sigiriya consists of an ancient citadel built by King Kashyapa during the 5th century. The Sigiriya site contains the ruins of an upper palace located on the flat top of the rock, a mid-level terrace that includes the Lion Gate and the mirror wall with its frescoes, the lower palaces clings to the slopes below the rocks. The moats, walls and gardens of the palace extended for a few hundred metres from the base of the rock. The site was both a palace and a fortress. The upper palace on the top of the rock includes cisterns cut into the rock.

Close up of the Lion's Paw

Site plan

Sigiriya is considered to be one of the most important urban planning sites of the first millennium, and the site plan is considered very elaborate and imaginative. The plan combined concepts of symmetry and asymmetry to intentionally interlock the man-made geometrical and natural forms of the surroundings. On the west side of the rock lies a park for the royals, laid out on a symmetrical plan; the park contains water-retaining structures, including sophisticated surface/subsurface hydraulic systems, some of which are working today. The south contains a man-made reservoir; these were extensively used from the previous capital of the dry zone of Sri Lanka. Five gates were placed at entrances. The more elaborate western gate is thought to have been reserved for the royals.

Frescoes

Artwork

John Still in 1907 wrote, "The whole face of the hill appears to have been a gigantic picture gallery... the largest picture in the world perhaps". The paintings would have covered most of the western face of the rock, an area 140 m (460 ft) long and 40 m (130 ft) high. There are references in the graffiti to 500 ladies in these paintings. However, most have been lost forever. More frescoes, different from those on the rock face, can be seen elsewhere, for example on the ceiling of the location called the "Cobra Hood Cave".

Frescos at Sigiriya found at Cobra hood cave

Although the frescoes are classified as in the Anuradhapura period, the painting style is considered unique; the line and style of application of the paintings differing from Anuradhapura paintings. The lines are painted in a form which enhances the sense of volume of the figures. The paint has been applied in sweeping strokes, using more pressure on one side, giving the effect of a deeper colour tone towards the edge. Other paintings of the Anuradhapura period contain similar approaches to painting, but do not have the sketchy lines of the Sigiriya style, having a distinct artists' boundary line. The true identity of the ladies in these paintings still has not been confirmed. There are various ideas about their identity. Some believe that they are the ladies of the kings while others think that they are women taking part in religious observances. These pictures have a close resemblance to paintings seen in the Ajanta Caves in India.

1967 vandalism incident

On 14 October 1967, paint was splashed on the frescoes in a act of vandalism. Luciano Maranzi, an expert trained at the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property in Rome, assisted the restoration, which took until 11 April 1968. It was considered the most challenging effort undertaken by the Chemical Preservation Division of the Department of Archaeology. There is continued concern that the original colours of the frescoes are fading, with a report presented in 2010 suggesting that the 22 frescoes have been fading since 1930.

Mirror wall

The mirror wall and spiral stairs leading to the frescoes

Originally this wall was so reflective that the king could see himself as he walked alongside it. Made of brick masonry and covered in highly polished white plaster, the wall is now partially covered with verses scribbled by visitors, some of them dating from as early as the 8th century. Most, however, date from the 9th and 10th century. People of all walks of life, from poets to provincial governors to housewives, wrote on the wall. This is the only evidence of poetry found in the Anuradhapura period.

One example is;

ඇසිමි

Aesimi
දුන්
dun
හසුන්
hasun
හසුන්
hasun
සෙයින්
seyin
විල්
vil
දුත්
dut
Like geese who have seen a lake, I listened to the message given by her.
මුල
Mula
ලා
la
මා
ma
සැනැහි
saenaehi
පුල්
pul
පියුමන්
piyuman
සේය්
sey
බමර්
bamar
දුත්
dut
Like a bee who has seen full-blown lotuses, the bewildered heart of mine was consoled.
This couplet uses a play on words as in the combination of hasun (message) with hasun (swans). The poet's eagerness to hear from his lady love is compared to the bee's fascination for lotus blooms, whose large petals provide it an easy landing pad to drink its nectar and frolic if it wishes.
Out of the 1500 plus poems, most are addressed to the ladies on the frescoes. Men praised their beauty and women shared their envy. A contemporary female, clearly less enamoured with the frescoes, records different, if equally passionate emotions:
"A deer-eyed maiden of the mountain side arouses anger in my mind. In her hand she holds a string of pearls, and in her eyes she assumes rivalry with me."
Further writing on the mirror wall now has been banned for the protection of the old writings. The Archaeological Commissioner of Ceylon, Senarath Paranavithana, deciphered 685 verses written in the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries CE on the mirror wall. One such poem from these long-past centuries,
බුදල්මි
සියොර ආමි සිහිගිරි
බැලීමි ගි බොහො ජන
ලිතුයෙන් නොලිමි
Roughly translated from ancient Sinhala, is: "I am Budal [the writer's name]. Came with hundreds of people to see Sigiriya. Since all the others wrote poems, I did not!"
Gardens

The gardens of Sigiriya are among the oldest landscaped gardens in the world.[citation needed] The gardens are divided into three distinct but linked forms: water gardens, cave and boulder gardens, and terraced gardens.

Water gardens

A pool in the garden complex

The gardens of Sigiriya, as seen from the summit of the Sigiriya rock

The water gardens are in the central section of the western precinct. Three principal gardens are found here. The first garden consists of a plot surrounded by water. It is connected to the main precinct using four causeways, with gateways placed at the head of each causeway.

The second contains two long, deep pools set on either side of the path. Two shallow, serpentine streams lead to these pools. Fountains made of circular limestone plates are placed here. Underground water conduits supply water to these fountains which are still functional, especially during the rainy season. Two large islands are located on either side of the second water garden. Summer palaces are built on the flattened surfaces of these islands. Two more islands are located farther to the north and the south. These islands are built in a manner similar to the island in the first water garden.

The third garden is situated on a higher level than the other two. It contains a large, octagonal pool with a raised podium on its northeast corner. The large brick and stone wall of the citadel is on the eastern edge of this garden.

The water gardens are built symmetrically on an east-west axis. The outer moat connects them on the west and the large artificial lake to the south of the Sigiriya rock. All the pools are also interlinked using an underground conduit network fed by the lake, and connected to the moats. A miniature water garden is located to the west of the first water garden, consisting of several small pools and watercourses. This recently discovered smaller garden appears to have been built after the Kashyapan period, possibly between the 10th and 13th centuries.

Boulder gardens

The boulder gardens consist of several large boulders linked by winding pathways. The gardens extend from the northern slopes to the southern slopes of the hills at the foot of Sigiris rock. Most of these boulders had a building or pavilion upon them; there are cuttings that were used as footings for brick walls and beams. They used to be pushed off from the top to attack enemies when they approached.

Views from the top of Sigiriya rock

Terraced gardens

The terraced gardens are formed from the natural hill at the base of the Sigiriya rock. A series of terraces rises from the pathways of the boulder garden to the staircases on the rock. These have been created by the construction of brick walls, and are located in a roughly concentric plan around the rock. The path through the terraced gardens is formed by a limestone staircase. From this staircase, there is a covered path on the side of the rock, leading to the uppermost terrace where the lion staircase is situated.

Sigiriya as seen from the nearby Pidurangala Rock.

In popular culture

- Some scenes from the music video for the 1982 single "Save a Prayer" by Duran Duran were filmed at the top of Sigiriya.
- Sigiriya was featured in the eleventh episode of The Amazing Race 6 in 2005.
- Arthur C. Clarke based the fictional "Yakkagala" on Sigiriya in his novel The Fountains of Paradise. He felt that the reality of Sigiriya was "so astonishing that I have had no need to change it in any way."